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Build a Six-Figure Tree House

So much for Thoreau.

- By Ilana Diamond



In a not-too-far-off suburb of Long Island, where nothing is ever too good (or too much) for the children, some parents are spending up to \$100,000 on professionally designed tree houses. There's enough backyard building that the sub-specialty has its own starchitects, each with his own style: For a young neighbor in Brookhaven named Mackenzie, Michael Ince, a wizard with recycled wood (and fiberglass, for the roof), adopted his signature Tolkeinesque style to the treetops. Donna Karan met celebrity tree-house designer Roderick Romero through a yoga instructor—he built a tree house in Tuscany with stained-glass windows for Sting, too—and ended up commissioning him to build a house for her grandson Miles in a silverleaf maple in Oyster Bay. Long Island native Pete Nelson designed a 120-square-foot tri-level tree palace on a Westchester estate for two preteen girls out of salvaged barn wood. Nelson, the author of *Treehouses of the World*, is the Johnny Appleseed of the craft, holding workshops (with partner Jake Jacob) and consulting for people who want to try to build their own.

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